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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

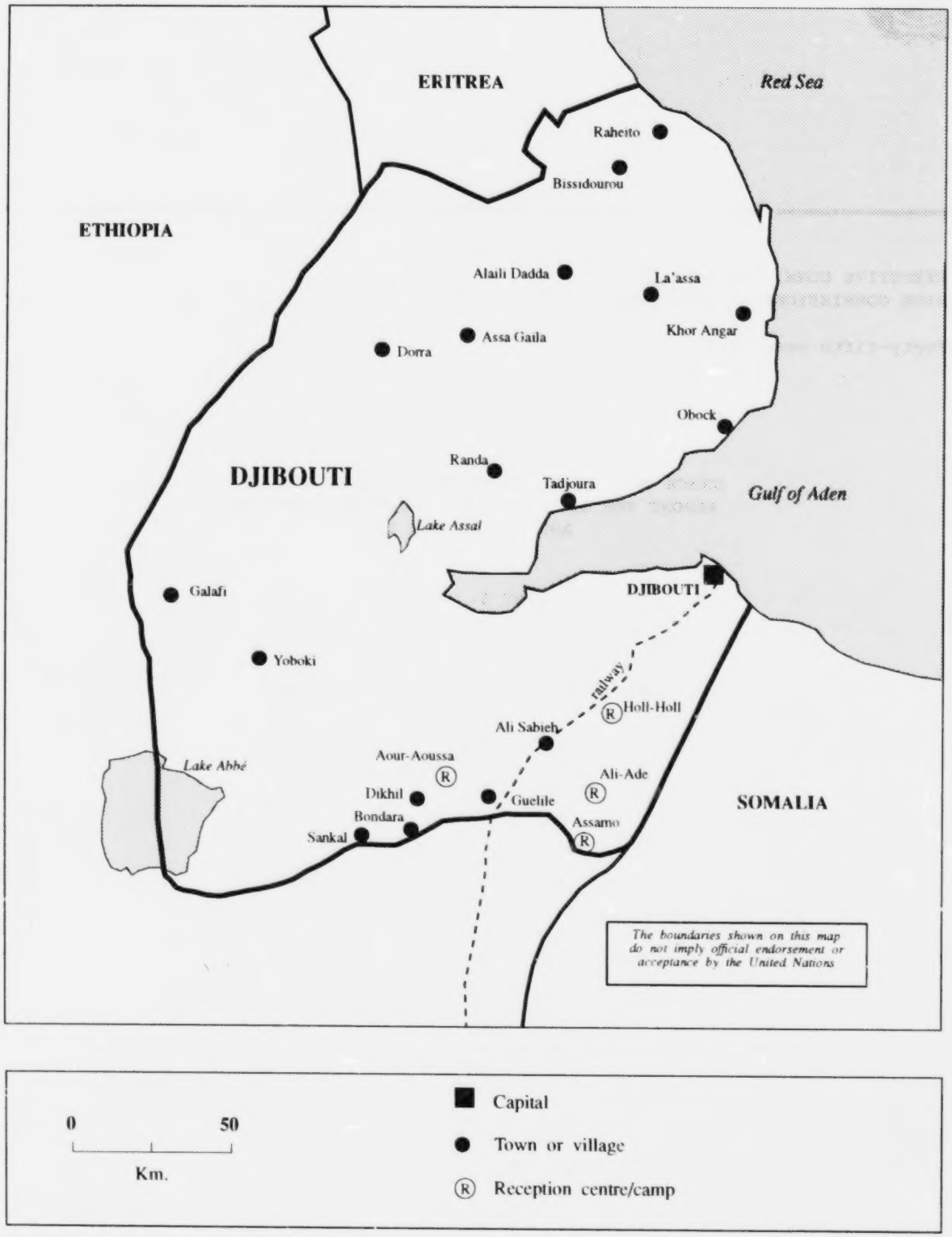
PART I. AFRICA

Section 7 - Djibouti

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-02801

DJIBOUTI


ERITREA
Red Sea
Raheito
Bissidourou
ETHIOPIA
Alaili Dadda
La'assa
Khor Angar
Assa Gaila
Dorra
Obock
DJIBOUTI
Randa
Tadjoura
Gulf of Aden
Lake Assal
Galafi
DJIBOUTI
Yoboki
railway
Holl-Holl
Ali Sabieh
Aour-Aoussa
Lake Abbé
Ali-Ade
Dikhil
Guelile
SOMALIA
Bondara
Assamo
Sankal
The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations
0
50
Km.
Capital
Town or village
Reception centre/camp

I.7 DJIBOUTI

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At 31 December 1993, a total of 34,100 refugees were assisted by UNHCR in Djibouti, of whom 32,200 (17,400 Somalis and 14,800 Ethiopians) were accommodated in the four refugee camps of Holl-Holl, Ali Addé, Aour Aoussa and Assamo, whereas some 1,900 were urban refugees living in the capital city. In addition, following a request from the Government, UNHCR agreed in February 1993 to transfer 30,000 unassisted refugees/displaced persons from Djibouti-ville to the camps, where care and maintenance would be provided to them pending the possibility of voluntary repatriation to Ethiopia and Somalia. In this regard, 5,000 persons were transferred during 1993 and have been included in the total camp population statistics cited above. The gender breakdown of the assisted refugee population at the end of December 1993 was as follows:

Country of Origin	Male	Female	Total
Somalia	8,400	9,300	17,700
Ethiopia	7,700	8,700	16,400
Total	**16,100**	**18,000**	**34,100**

2. The majority of Somali refugees in Djibouti originate from Awdal province, North-West Somalia, and fled their country as a result of internal conflicts and civil war in 1991. Most Ethiopian refugees also entered Djibouti in 1991, following the change of Government and subsequent civil strife in various regions of their country. They originated mainly from the Hararghe region in eastern Ethiopia. The majority of the refugees in Djibouti are of nomadic background, with an average family size of four persons. Women and children under 18 years of age represent about 80 per cent of the assisted refugee population.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

3. Following on agreement reached in February 1993 between UNHCR and the Government, to transfer a total of 30,000 unassisted refugees/displaced persons from Djibouti-ville to the camps in phases, a first group of 5,000 persons was transferred in April/May 1993. An outbreak of cholera caused the operation to be suspended between July and December 1993. In January 1994, an additional group of 2,500 persons was transferred to the camp of Holl-Holl, which brought the total number of transferees to 7,500 and that of camp residents to nearly 35,000 by the first quarter of 1994. The programme was again suspended in late January at UNHCR's request, in order to modify procedures for the transfer operation. Meanwhile, UNHCR and the Government have established new criteria for the

continuation of the transfer operation, and a third group of 5,000 persons is to be transferred in due course. The completion of the transfer exercise for the remaining 17,500 persons will depend on the pace of implementation of the repatriation programmes to Somalia and Ethiopia, which were initiated by UNHCR in the last quarter of 1993, but which have shown little progress to-date.

4. An improvement in the security situation in Ethiopia was accompanied by several information campaigns for the refugees and has enabled UNHCR actively to pursue the repatriation programme to Ethiopia. By October 1993, UNHCR had registered 9,885 potential returnees amongst the Ethiopian refugee population. In October/November 1993, a screening mission by the Ethiopian authorities spent six weeks in Djibouti in order to verify the identity of the prospective repatriants. At the request of the Government of Ethiopia, the precise villages of origin of future returnees as well as their tribal and clan affiliations have been determined. Funds have been made available by UNHCR for the repatriation operations and the rehabilitation of the main facilities in areas of origin/return. For the time being however, the repatriation movement to Ethiopia has been put on hold pending a formal authorization by the Ethiopian authorities to commence the operation.

5. In view of the relative stability achieved in North-West Somalia following the 1993 Boroma Conference, a repatriation programme to this region for Somali refugees in Djibouti has been set up by UNHCR. In collaboration with the Government of Djibouti and the Hargeisa Administration, a tripartite committee had been established to ensure the programme's smooth implementation. As part of the confidence building process, visits have been undertaken to the villages of origin of the refugees in Awdal province in order to assess rehabilitation and reintegration requirements. Information meetings with refugee representatives have been organized. Elders and other representatives from the areas of origin of refugees in Awdal province have been brought to Djibouti to visit the camps and meet with the refugees.

6. As a result, 15,418 refugees have registered in the four camps for voluntary repatriation to North-West Somalia. Despite these preparations, the repatriation movement is still on hold due to a combination of factors which include complex political reconciliation issues, security considerations (demobilization, disarmament, mine clearance), the slow pace of the rehabilitation/reconstruction programme and some logistical difficulties.

Programme objectives and priorities

7. Voluntary repatriation is considered to be the only feasible long-term solution for the majority of refugees in Djibouti, and one of the fundamental objectives of UNHCR in the country programme for 1994 and 1995 is to facilitate the repatriation of the great majority. In view of the constraints and slow pace of repatriation, efforts continue at the same time aimed at increasing the absorption capacity of the refugee camps on the one hand, and improving the assistance provided on the other, so that reasonable standards can be attained in vital sectors such as water, health care, sanitation, nutrition and shelter.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

8. The Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés (ONARS) remains UNHCR's governmental implementing partner for the overall assistance programme for refugees in the camps. Its management and monitoring capacity was strengthened by the secondment of a Finance Officer and the assignment of four United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) in early 1993. In addition, the implementation of programmes related to health, sanitation and water in the camps is being administered by specialized international NGOs, such as Médecins Sans Frontières - Holland (MSF-Holland) during 1993 and the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA) since January 1994, in close cooperation with ONARS.

9. The Eglise Protestante Evangélique de Djibouti (EPED) has been entrusted with implementating education programmes in the camps since early 1994, in addition to the care, counselling and education assistance to urban-based refugees in Djibouti-ville, which it already carries out.

10. In 1993, some 8,700 mt of basic food supplies were mobilized by WFP to assist Somali and Ethiopian refugees in Djibouti. The supply of an estimated 10,400 mt is planned for 1994. Needs for 1995 will be based on a joint assessment at the end of 1994. In addition, bilateral contributions of complementary and supplementary food, donated to ONARS, are received and distributed to refugees.

General Programmes

Variations in planned activities in 1993

11. UNHCR undertook a registration exercise in the four camps in March 1993 which established a total figure of 27,200 camp residents. With 5,000 refugees transferred from Djibouti-ville to the camps in April/May 1993, the total number of camp residents stood at 32,200 at the end of 1993 and the UNHCR assistance programme has been revised accordingly. The repatriation programme to Ethiopia planned for 1993 for around 10,000 persons was suspended for various socio-political reasons.

1994 planned implementation

12. There are very limited prospects for income-generating activities in the camps and the living conditions have remained rudimentary. The refugees will therefore continue to depend on UNHCR's assistance until conditions are conducive to their repatriation. Consequently, efforts undertaken to improve camp infrastructures and to enhance the management capacity of ONARS will be pursued in the course of 1994. In particular, the funding of four UNV posts and the secondment of one Finance Officer to ONARS, (see paragraph 1.6.8 above), as well as the involvement of a specialized international NGO (AMDA) in the health sector will continue. Funds and services have also been made available to meet the needs of potential repatriants in the expectation that their voluntary repatriation to Ethiopia and North-West Somalia will materialize. Resettlement cases will be processed throughout 1994, focusing mainly on family reunion.

1995 programme proposals

Care and maintenance

13. The proposed allocation for 1995 for the assistance programme in the four refugee camps is similar to the allocation retained for 1994, despite the voluntary repatriation operations planned for 1994. This is due to the fact that the scheduled transfer of refugees from Djibouti-ville to the camps during 1994, which involves some 25,000 persons, will compensate for anticipated voluntary repatriation departures. The development of new infrastructure in the camps is not envisaged for 1995.

14. Implementation arrangements utilized in 1994 will be maintained for 1995, with the objective of keeping the critical sectors of health, water and nutrition under the continuing supervision of AMDA. Particular attention will be paid to the water needs of refugees, especially in the camps of Ali Adde and Assamo, where water is both saline and scarce. In addition, present efforts to achieve a more efficient implementation of the assistance programme by the main implementing partner, ONARS, will continue.

15. Assistance to the urban caseload will be reduced as the number of refugees will decrease by approximately 1,000, who are expected to repatriate in 1994. This assistance will continue to cover the areas of education, vocational training, counselling services and the specific needs of disabled refugees.

Voluntary repatriation

16. Promotion of voluntary repatriation will continue among the camp and urban refugee population, with the direct involvement of the refugee community leaders.

Resettlement

17. Existing family reunion cases will be submitted to receiving countries along with new, deserving cases. In particular, cases of unaccompanied children and women-at-risk will be identified and processed. UNHCR resettlement activities throughout 1995 will, however, remain very restricted as the majority of refugees would prefer to repatriate to their country of origin. Resettlement activities will be financed from the Overall Allocation for Resettlement.

Special Programmes

Horn of Africa

Variations in planned activities in 1993

18. In 1993 the planned repatriation of about 10,000 Ethiopian refugees from Djibouti did not occur. For Somali refugees, however, a repatriation plan of action was drawn up by a tripartite committee comprising representatives of the Government of Djibouti, the North-West Somalia Administration and UNHCR. A

registration exercise for voluntary repatriation to North-West Somalia was conducted in the camps in late 1993. Approximately 15,000 Somali refugees in the camps expressed a desire to return. An allocation of $ 811,000 was made available late in the year to cover the costs of the repatriation movement of this first group.

1994 planned implementation

19. The implementation of the repatriation project to North-West Somalia will continue in 1994. It is expected that the 15,000 refugees willing to repatriate will be assisted to do so. The initial allocation will need to be increased during 1994 to cover the needs of the group of 15,000 and any additional potential returnees who might-volunteer and who will be transferred from the city of Djibouti-ville to the refugee camps in the course of 1994.

1995 programme proposals

20. The emphasis in 1995 will still be on the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. Some 20,000 Somali refugees (urban and camp-based) are expected to register for voluntary repatriation in late 1994 and early 1995. Hence the programme requirements for 1995 will remain similar to the 1994 allocation.

Other Trust Funds

21. A sum of $ 345,250 was donated by the Government of Germany for the purchase in 1993 of dried skimmed milk and sugar for Somali and Ethiopian refugees.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

Variations in planned activities in 1993

22. In view of the delay incurred in the repatriation programmes initially planned for 1993, there were no savings as originally anticipated under General Programmes. General operating expenses were increased in order to meet the new requirements resulting from the transfer of refugees/displaced persons from Djibouti-ville to the camps and to cover costs associated with the subsequent plan of action to improve the services and the absorption capacity of the camps. During 1993, a Finance Officer was also seconded to ONARS, UNHCR's principle implementing partner in Djibouti, with the objective of improving their operational capacity. The situation along the border with Somalia in the Zeila area obliged staff members to make frequent trips to the area, resulting in increased travel costs. The influx of Somali refugees necessitated the hiring of short-term staff on a temporary basis; coupled with an increase in the cost of living, this resulted in higher than expected expenditure for salaries and related staff costs.

1994 planned implementation

23. In order to meet the new operational requirements, including back-up support for UNHCR Hargeisa, the Branch Office moved in early January 1994 to new, more

spacious premises with a slight increase in rent. Seven posts were created to support activities in Djibouti and Somalia, namely: an Administrative Officer post at the L.3 level which will be funded under the Annual Programme beginning in July 1994; a Repatriation Assistant post; a Senior Secretary post; a Secretary (Administration/Finance) post; a Driver post; and two Telecommunications Operator posts, which are effective from June 1994 until, initially, 31 December 1995. These posts will be funded under the Horn of Africa Special Programme. The Telecommunications Operator posts were created to meet the needs of the repatriation process, the transfer operations and to assist in the improvement of the operational capacity of ONARS.

1995 programme proposals

24. On the assumption that the pending voluntary repatriation of the 15,000 Somali and 10,000 Ethiopian refugees will get under way during 1994, and that those transferred to the camps during 1994 will also opt for repatriation in 1995, UNHCR activities in Djibouti are expected to decrease by the end of 1995, allowing for a considerable reduction of posts and other operational costs in 1996. As a consequence, all time-limited posts were extended to 31 December 1995 and initial non-staff costs are budgeted at a similar level to the revised 1994 estimate. The situation will be continously reviewed as the operation phases down and the repatriation gains momentum.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN DJIBOUTI

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
3,161.8	1,595.2	1,593.1	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	1,339.4
122.5 a/	119.4	119.4	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	119.4
3.7 b/	–	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
8.9 b/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
–	–	846.7	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	793.6
3,296.9	1,714.6	2,559.2	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	2,252.4
663.8	444.2	188.5	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	242.2
3,960.7	2,158.8	2,747.7	TOTAL (1)	2,494.6
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
1,003.3	196.8	811.4	HORN OF AFRICA	757.0
–	–	154.4	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	151.9
–	–	31.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	53.0
345.2	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Food	–
1,348.5	196.8	996.8	TOTAL (2)	961.9
5,309.2	2,355.6	3,744.5	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	3,456.5

a/ of which US$ 3,049 incurred against Overall Allocation
b/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation